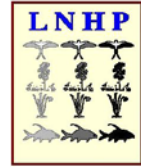




Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Natural Heritage Program



Lasmigona complanata
White Heelsplitter



Identification: Mollusk shaped like a flattened oval (without wing); shell is thin in juveniles and thickens with age. The exterior is dull, dark green in juveniles and black in adults. The shell surface is smooth to the touch. A raised “wing” develops as young mussels grow, making the mussel appear triangular, the wing disappears (breaks off) as the mollusk matures. Mother-of-pearl is white and thick in the front.

Measurements: Length is 8 inches.

Taxonomic comments: There are two subspecies; the Alabama heelsplitter, *Lasmigona complanata alabamensis*, in the Pearl River drainages and eastern Louisiana and *Lasmigona complanata complanata* in the Mississippi River drainages and western Louisiana.

Status: Global rank is **G5** and state rank is **S1**.

Habitat: Narrow and shallow (1m depth) rivers, streams, or pools. It is typically found buried deep within a substrate of sand, gravel, or mud.

Range: Gulf and Mississippi basin interior drainages.

Food habits*: Mussels are continually pumping water through their siphon. Their diet is composed of the various microscopic plants and animals from the water and organic matter from stream bottoms that they filter from this water.

Reproduction: Breeds between September and April. Glochidia hosts include the common carp, green sunfish, largemouth bass, and white crappie.

Reason for decline*: Loss of habitat as a result of siltation, impoundment, and the addition of pollutants to streams and rivers may contribute to the decline of this species.

* Indicates generalized information for freshwater mussels in the absence of information specific to this species

Interesting facts: 1) When buried in the substrate of the streams, the white heelsplitter orients itself so that its wing is facing upwards. It probably got its name as a result of people cutting themselves on its wing while walking in stream and river beds. 2) It has been reported to produce pearls. 3) Six individuals of white heelsplitter were found in the Tensas River in Madison Parish in 1994, the first recorded observation of this species in Louisiana since 1893.

Known distribution in Louisiana:



Dates of documented observations are: 1995 and 1996

References

- Cummings, K.S., and C.A. Mayer. 1992. Field guide to freshwater mussels of the Midwest. Illinois Natural History Survey Manual 5.
- Howells, R.G., R.W. Neck, and H.D. Murray. 1996. Freshwater mussels of Texas. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Austin, Texas.
- Murray, H.D., and A.B. Leonard. 1962. Handbook of Unionid Mussels in Kansas. University of Kansas Museum of Natural History. Lawrence, Kansas.
- NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. 2002. Version 1.6. Arlington, Virginia, USA: NatureServe. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: June 10, 2003).
- Shively, S.H., J.J. Barker, and M.S.Ewing. 1995. *Lasmigona complanata* (Bivalvia: Unionidae) from the Tensas river of Northeastern Louisiana. The Texas Journal of Science 47:321-322.
- Vidrine, M.F. 1993. The historical distributions of freshwater mussels in Louisiana. Gail Q. Vidrine Collectables, Eunice, Louisiana.